

A STUDY OF THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE USED TO  
REFLECT THE MEANING OF THE TEXT IN  
FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN.

by  
Donalee R. Inglis  
Master of Music in Applied-Music (Piano)





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THE TEXT IN FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN

BY

DONALEE R. INGLIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read,  
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an essay entitled A STUDY OF THE MUSICAL LANGUAGE USED TO RE-  
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mitted by Donalee R. Inglis in partial fulfillment of the re-  
quirements for the degree of Master of Music.

.....A. Fiske.....  
Supervisor

.....Rachell Weiss.....  
Second Reader

Date April 14, 1982.



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## CHAPTER I

### AN OVERVIEW OF SCHUMANN'S FRAUENLIEBE UND LEBEN

Robert Schumann's song cycle Frauenliebe und Leben, one of the most loved cycles in the lieder repertoire, was written in July of 1840, a few months before his marriage to Clara Wieck.

Schumann felt for many years that instrumental writing was the only genre that could "express the inexpressible" in that words were too rational to convey the feelings intended. In 1840 he abandoned this genre and wrote no less than one hundred and thirty-seven vocal compositions. In this "year of song" he wished to "free the word from the curse of reason, and by means of unity of feeling between language and music, to fuse them into something like a universal work."<sup>1</sup>

It is apparent from the output of songs that Schumann became totally engrossed in this new medium and felt he had achieved his wish to integrate poetry and music in a new unity. His letters from this period reveal the excitement he found when writing in this new genre. "I can hardly tell you what a treat it is to write for the voice, compared with instrumental composition and what a ferment I am in as I sit at work."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Einstein, Music In The Romantic Era, (New York, W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1947), p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>Mary Herbert, trans; The Life of Robert Schumann, Told In His Letters, vol. 1, (Richard Bentley and Sons, 1890), pp. 247-248.



The text of Frauenliebe und Leben is taken from a group of nine poems written in 1830. The poet, Louis Adelbert von Chamisso, a Frenchman by birth, moved to Germany during the outbreak of the French revolution. In Berlin he was appointed Page to Queen Louise, wife of King Frederick II. Chamisso applied himself to the study of the German language and literature, particularly to poetry.

This poetic cycle, giving a woman's view of love, has been belittled because it makes women seem inferior. It must be taken into account that this poetry was written in a time when the ideal of feminine subservience was widely accepted. This poetry gives a view of how Chamisso hoped to be regarded by his wife and how he assumed she would react to his death. The text begins with a woman's first glimpse at her future husband and follows the natural course of events with an engagement, a wedding and the first child. In the eighth poem their separation, brought about by his death, causes his first deep pain.

In the last poem, which Schumann chose not to use, she finds consolation in the lives of her children and grand-children. Eric Sams suggests in The Songs of Robert Schumann that the composer would have found the last poem difficult to set because 1840 was a year of "innocence, rather than experience."<sup>3</sup>

With the eighth poem having such intense feelings of love, hate and despair, Schumann may have felt that the ninth poem would have brought an anticlimax to the structure he had planned. The postlude of the last song is a dramatic release of tension, reflecting back to

---

<sup>3</sup>Eric Sams, The Songs of Robert Schumann, with a Foreword by Gerald Moore, (New York, W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1962), p. 137.



happier times in the first poem. This postlude may not have been as effective if used after the less intense text of Chamisso's ninth poem which brings solace to the grieving woman.

Lieder were written by most of the romantic composers but few were as successful as Robert Schumann's. His vast knowledge of literature gave him an added insight into the texts. His father, a book publisher and writer, had a great influence on the cultivation of his literary taste.

Schumann's method of conveying the meaning of the text through the music is the quality that distinguished him from earlier composers such as Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. With eighteenth century composers the word had the principal role and the piano subordinated itself. In certain isolated instances with these composers and in many instances with Franz Schubert, the composer succeeded in obtaining perfect balance between voice and piano.

What was an exception with eighteenth century composers, and a more frequent occurrence with Schubert, became the rule with Schumann. What Schumann had entrusted to the lyrical tone of the piano in earlier writing was now given to the voice without relegating the piano to a purely accompanimental role.

Often the piano has its own melodic contour, independent of the vocal line, to create a specific mood as in "Helft mir ihr Schwestern," Ex. 1, Frauenliebe und Leben, p. 38, m.m. 1-4. In this, the fifth song of the cycle, the accompaniment figure creates a feeling of happiness and impatience as the young woman prepares for her wedding. The arpeggios establish an elated feeling before the voice enters. The dotted rhythm at the end of each measure seems to imitate the unsteadi-



ness of her heartbeat in the excitement.

Ex. 1

4

Occasionally the piano accompaniment shares the melody and in particular songs could stand alone and be musically complete as in "Du Ring an meinem Finger," Ex. 2, P. 36, m.m. 1-4, where the piano doubles the vocal line almost completely throughout the song.

Ex. 2

Postludes play a significant role in the 1840 songs. The term "postlude" is used in this instance to describe a concluding section or passage, separate from the basic structure of the song but added in order to confirm the impression of finality, using material heard previously in the song. Songs number 1, 2, 4 and 6 have postludes with material either reiterated note for note or developed further, while songs 5 and 7 use completely different material and thus may be more correctly categorized as "codettas." The concluding section of the final song uses material from the first song and serves as the postlude of the entire cycle.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Schumann, "Frauenliebe und Leben," in 85 Songs For Voice And Piano (High), Sergius Kagen, comp., (New York, International Music Co., No. 1847), p. 38.



Preludes and interludes are also associated with Schumann's 1840 songs. Interludes are found between verses and serve as cohesive material between sections and verses. The term "prelude" describes opening material for piano solo which is often extended to set up the mood or character of the piece as in "Mondnacht" (Moonlight). This song, written by Schumann, has a five measure prelude creating an atmosphere that is meant to express moonlight, Ex. 3, P. 12, m.m. 1-6.

Ex. 3



The songs of Frauenliebe und Leben have only brief preludes (excluding 2 and 3 which have none). When taking into account the simplicity of the text and Schumann's setting of it, it remains in character to have brief, unadorned preludes to set the mood.

The "turn" is a device used throughout the 1840 songs in the voice as well as the piano, as seen in "Er, der herrlichste von allen," Ex.4, P. 30, m.m. 7-9.

Ex. 4





Whether he used the "turn" in his vocal writing out of habit or purely as an expressive device that transcends all genres, it remains a distinctive quality of his style.<sup>5</sup>

One of Schumann's most unique qualities is his tendency towards a personal sentimentality in his songs. The German word for it is Innigkeit, for which there is no parallel term in the English language. The fact that four of the eight songs of Frauenliebe und Leben have the inscription innig gives insight into Schumann's feelings and how the songs should be interpreted by the performers.

In comparison with the heavy use of chromaticism by Schumann's contemporary Louis Spohr, Schumann used it less regularly but took special care in placing it to color specific words or phrases. In the first song of the cycle the young girl speaks of being blind to all else since she has seen her new love. To give extra color to the word blind Schumann uses the diminished seventh of the supertonic, Ex. 5,

Ex. 5

A musical score for a string quartet. The top staff is in 3/4 time, B-flat major, with a dynamic of piano (p). The lyrics 'Seit ich ihn gern hab', 'glücklich blind zu sein' are written below the notes. The bottom staff is in 2/4 time, B-flat major, with a dynamic of forte (f). The score consists of four staves, one for each string instrument: violin, viola, cello, and double bass.

<sup>5</sup>Gerald Abraham, ed., Schumann: A Symposium, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 101.



Schumann's use of rich inner melodies is a special quality found in many of his songs. The influence of J.S. Bach is evident with many composers and Schumann is no exception. One of his most pleasing uses of counterpoint is found in the postlude of "Er, der Herrlichste von allen," where for a few measures there is imitative counterpoint involving three voices, Ex. 6, P.33, m.m. 17-20.

Ex. 6



Schumann had a desire for order and symmetry which is seen in his organization of many piano and vocal compositions into groups. Most are musically integrated by key relationships and/or motto themes.

In Frauenliebe und Leben the most obvious reason for grouping the songs together is the text progression which unifies them and makes it unlikely for any song to be performed out of context.

The tonal movement from one song to the next is a fundamental means of overall organization in the cycle. The postlude of the last song, which is actually a reiteration of the first song, is completely independent from the final song and is actually the postlude of the entire cycle. When seen as a ninth song it creates a perfect balance in the cycle in that songs 1, 5 and 9 are in B-flat major.

The following table indicates the key of each song and their relationship to each other:



Song no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Key	B <sup>b</sup> +	E <sup>b</sup> +	C-	C +	E <sup>b</sup> +	B <sup>b</sup> +	G +	D +	d -	B <sup>b</sup> +
Relationship	Tonic	Sub-rel.	parallel	Sub- dom.	Tonic	Tonic	Dom.	parallel	Tonic	
	dom.	minor	major	dom.		major	of	minor		
		of Sub.				of	G +	of		
			dom.			rel. min.		D +		

Table 1. The key scheme of Frauenliebe und Leben.

This table shows three instances where the keys are related by a third--song 3 to 4, song 5 to 6 and song 8 to 9 (the postlude). Song two is in E-flat major, and song three is in C minor (the relative minor). This use of third relation is less significant when considering the close relationship between the two keys.

The points where the third relations occur is significant in that they mark off the most important stages in the unfolding drama. In song four her new life begins with the engagement ring, in the sixth song she is expecting her first child, and in the postlude she is alone again reflecting back to the first glimpse of her husband.

Symmetry is noticeable in the individual songs as well as the overall design. All songs (excluding number eight) have a return to A at the end. The following table indicates this scheme:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
AA	AA'BA"CC'A"	ABA'A'	ABACA	ABACA'	AABA'	AA'AA'	ABC
✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	

Table 2. The form of each song of Frauenliebe und Leben.



One idea that strengthens this scheme is the repetition of the first verse in whole or in part at the end of five of the eight songs (shown with a checkmark in the table above. Three of these repetitions are from the original poetry and two are additions by the composer (indicated with a line [-]).

Beethoven, who wrote some eighty original songs as well as one hundred and fifty arrangements of folk and national songs, has been given credit for creating the Lied.<sup>6</sup> Though his songs often remain in the eighteenth century tradition, his inventive genius set many precedents for composers such as Schumann to build on. An die ferne Geliebte Op. 98, a song cycle written in 1816, is considered the culmination of Beethoven's vocal writing. During Schumann's time of estrangement from his beloved Clara, this cycle, translated "To the distant love," acquired special significance in his life.

Schumann often quotes from this cycle, and repeats words or phrases as did Beethoven. Schumann's idea of using material from the first song in the final postlude of the cycle was used first by Beethoven in An die ferne Geliebte.

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<sup>6</sup> Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune, The Beethoven Companion, (London, Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 411.



CHAPTER II  
ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS

"Seit ich ihn gesehen"

(A) Seit ich ihn gesehen;  
      Glaub ich blind zu sein;  
      Wo ich hin nur blicke  
          Seh ich ihn allein;  
      Wie ihm wachsen Traume  
          Schwebt sein Bild mir vor,  
      Taucht aus tiefstem Dunkel  
          Heller nur empor.

(A) Sonst ist licht- und farblos  
      Alles um  mich her  
      Nach der Schwestern Spiele  
          Nicht begehr ich mehr  
      Möchte lieber weinen  
          Still im Kämmerlein;  
      Seit ich ihn gesehen,  
          Glaub ich blind zu sein.

In "Seit ich ihn gesehen," the first song of the cycle, the young woman, seeing her future husband for the first time, can think of no one else. Childish games are put behind her as she weeps for him, alone in her room.



The metrical flow of the poems is reinforced in all the songs of the cycle (except number six which will be discussed later).

The verbal meter of "Seit ich ihn gesehen," trochaic trimeter, has a strong-weak pulse (–u) of three feet in each line of verse as seen above. Beats are shown above the strong pulses of the poetry to show coincidence of the metrical strong pulse and the musical pulse. The pulse of this song becomes slightly irregular due to the placement of the longest note on the second beat of the measure, characteristic of the Sarabande, Ex. 5.

This song, which rarely strays from the simple diatonic chords of B-flat major, remains intimate with a calmness reflecting the trance she is in while thinking of "him." The brief one measure introduction, with an eighth note rest on the third beat, sets the mood, giving a breathless, dreamy quality, Ex. 5.

The song consists of two verses, sixteen measures in length, set strophically with a four-measure piano postlude. The only change in the text is Schumann's repetition of the word heller in the first verse, Ex. 7, P. 28, m.m. 13-15, his desire to give extra emphasis to the word heller meaning bright or clear describing his image.

Ex. 7



Throughout this cycle minor alterations occur in the repetition of a section to accommodate the differences in the number of syllables



in the verses at identical points. The second verse of this song, with no word like heller which can possibly be repeated to fit the tune, employs a quarter note rest in the vocal line, Ex. 8, P. 29, m.m. 13-15.

Ex. 8

An alteration at the beginning of the second measure of the second strophe, bringing the second phrase in without the quarter rest used in the first strophe, gives attention to the word alles (everything).

A diminished seventh chord under the word blind gives an underlying current of melancholy to the otherwise optimistic text. This chord is significant in that it is the diminished seventh of C minor, giving a temporary feeling of tonicization of the supertonic.

Ex. 5. A leap down of a seventh gives special color to Tiefstem (deepest), signifying the deepness of the darkness, Ex. 9, P. 28, m.m. 11-13.

Ex. 9



"Er, der Herrlichste von allen"

(A) Er, der Herrlichste von Allen  
Wie so milde wie so gut!  
Holde Lippen, Klares Auge,  
Heller Sinn und fester Muth.

(A') So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,  
Hell und herrlich, jener Stern,  
Also er an meinem Himmel,  
Hell und herrlich hoch und fern.

(B) Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen,  
Nur betrachten deinen Schein,  
Nur in Demuth ihn betrachten,  
Selig nur und traurig sein!

(A'') Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,  
Deinem Glücke nur geweiht;  
Darfst mich niedre Magd nicht kennen,  
Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

(C) Nur die Würdigste von Allen  
Soll beglücken deine Wahl,  
Und sich will die Hohe segnen,  
(Segnen) viele tausend Mal.



(C') Will mich freuen dann und weinen,  
Selig, selig bin ich dann,  
Sollte mir das Herz auch brechen,  
Brich, O Herz, was liegt daran.

(A'') (Schumann's repetition of first verse.)

"Er, der Herrlichste von allen," the second song, is translated "He, the noblest man of all." She compares him to a star, clear and magnificent, yet distant. Wishing to contemplate his brightness very humbly, she feels too lowly to be part of his life.

Schumann chose to repeat "Hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!" (high star of splendour) and omitted Chamisso's repetition of the word segnen (bless). Chamisso has hoch not hehr at measure sixteen, and soll not darf at measure forty. Schumann's repetition of the first verse at the end of the song, finishing with a second repetition of the last half of the same verse, is a use of poetry as a means to an end. Texts are altered and repeated to make a musical form, in this case rondo form (AA'BA"CC'A'''').

This song may also be understood as being in three sections as illustrated in the following table:

1 AA' ↑ interlude	2 B	3 A''	4 CC' ↑ interlude	5 A'''
1	2	3	3	

Table 3. The form of "Er, der Herrlichste von allen."

The meter of this poem is trochaic dimeter, with four, strong-weak feet in each line of verse, with six stanzas. Dotted rhythm



a typical trait of Schumann's writing, is found throughout this song and creates a feeling of joy in contrast to the slower compelling rhythm of the first song. The strong pulse, created by the constant eighth-note chords in the accompaniment, begins at the introduction and continues without rest to the end, Ex. 10, P. 30, m.m. 1-5.

Ex. 10

Lebhaft.

Kr. der Herrlichkeit von Al - len, wie so mil - dr, wie - m  
gut! Hölde!

p

The vocal line begins very ecstatically, outlining the tonic triad and then dropping a seventh, but becomes more lyrical when "he" is described as being "mild and good," Ex. 10.

Schumann often connects poetic segments by finishing one unit on an unresolved tone and delaying the resolution until the beginning of the next phrase, as in measure three where the A natural under allen is not resolved until the word milde, Ex. 10.

The bass imitates the rhythmic movement of the vocal line in measure six and seven, creating an echo effect, Ex. 11, P. 30, m.m. 5-7.

gut! Hölde Lip - pru, bla - roe Ae - ro, blü - ler!



After the A section is repeated, a four measure interlude makes a fluid transference into the B section, beginning on measure twenty-one. "He" is told to wander on his way so that she may gaze on his brightness. The melody, with stepwise motion, is a sharp contrast to the leaping melody of the A section. The melody wanders up to C, to E-flat and finally to F, Ex. 12, P. 31, m.m. 6-11.

Ex. 12



The piano line, following a measure behind the voice, is symbolic of her need to stay close to him, but always a few paces behind.

In the A section at measure twenty-nine Schumann repeats "hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!", making the section two measures longer than the opening verse. This repetition serves to bring the harmony back to the tonic, whereas a piano interlude served this same purpose in the first verse.

The dotted quarter followed by an eighth, found often in the B section, becomes the principal rhythmic unit of the C section beginning on measure thirty-eight. The text here discusses the finest woman who will be worthy of his choice. Schumann gives special attention to the word Wahl (choice), found on the highest note as well as one of the longest notes of the song, Ex. 13, P. 32, m.m. 9-11.



## Ex. 13



The only modulating sections in the song occur at C and the final return of A. At C, with the use of secondary dominants, the music moves through A-flat major (measure thirty-eight), D-flat major (measure fourty-one), and C major (measure forty-three); and through F major (measure forty-six), B-flat major (measure fourty-nine) and A major (measure fifty-one). Through the use of secondary dominants the song moves to D major, G major, C major and finally to F major, but moves quickly back to E-flat major.

A motive containing an accent on the second beat of the line found under the word Wahl (section C) returns in the postlude climaxing with intricate contrapuntal writing, Ex. 6.

"Ich Kann's nicht fassen"

(A)      Ich kann's nicht fassen nicht glauben,  
 Es hat ein Traum mich berückt;  
 Wie hätt er doch unter Allen  
 Mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?



(B)                    Mir wars er habe gesprochen:  
                       "Ich bin auf ewig dein"  
                       Mir wars ich träume noch immer,  
                       Es kann ja nimmer so sein.

(A')                    O lass im Traume mich sterben,  
                       Gewieget an seine Brust,  
                       Den seligsten Tod mich schlürfen  
                       In Thränen unendlicher Lust.

(A)                    (Schumann's repetition of the  
                       first verse).

The meter of the text to the third song is iambic trimeter with a weak-strong (˘-) pulse. This is the first song in which the vocal line enters on an anacrusis before the piano line.

In the text she cannot believe "he" has chosen her among all others. She speculates that it must be a dream and if this is true she wishes to die in this dream, cradled in his arms.

Schumann chose to repeat "es kann ja nimmer so sein" to emphasize the fact that it can never be thus. The first verse is repeated by Schumann at the end and after an eight measure interlude the first line of the song is repeated again.

This song is in ternary form (ABA'A). The A section consists of the first verse of the poem (in C minor); the B section (measure sixteen) consists of the second verse (beginning in C minor and ending in E-flat major); the return of A (measure thirty-seven) consists of the third verse (beginning in E-flat major and ending in C minor).



After the first verse is repeated again, in C minor, an eight-measure piano solo is stated followed by the repetition of the opening statement of the song (ending in C major).

The A section has a breathless excitement created by four short phrases of three measures (separated by rests) with staccato chords in the piano. Schumann places special emphasis on the word berückt (captivated) by using a diminished seventh held for two measures, significant in that it ends the first sentence on an inconclusive cadence, Ex. 14, P. 34, m.m. 1-8.

Ex. 14

Mit Leidenschaft.

3.

This idea is used again when the A section is repeated in E-flat major with the word Brust (breast), where she wishes to be cradled on his breast.

The B section, marked "Etwas Langsamer," becomes more melodic in contrast to the beginning, in a quasi recitative style. The accompaniment becomes more legato in the second section with the chords woven together through the use of sustained chords. "He" is quoted here as saying "Ich bin auf ewig dein" (I am yours forever). The high point of this section appears with the words "es kann ja nimmer so sein" (for it cannot be so). Schumann dwells on this statement by repeating it on higher pitches, bringing the melody to the key



of E flat major through secondary dominants in g minor, A-flat major, and F minor, Ex. 15, P. 34, m.m. 28-35.

Ex. 15



In measure thirty-seven the A section returns in the new key of Eflat major, with the thought of blissful death in his arms. The minor key returns with an exact repetition of the first verse in measure fifty-two. This is the true return of A, in that the earlier return of A was in a different key.

The opening melody, using the interval of a fourth is heard for the first time in the piano solo at measure sixty-eight. In measure seventy-five the interval expands to a sixth and finally in measure seventy-nine reaches an octave. The climax is heightened even more with the entrance of the voice in measure seventy-six. The song candences in the tonic major giving the song a final note of optimism that this dream could possibly be true, Ex. 16, P. 35, mm. 34-44.



## Ex. 16

"Du Ring an meinem Finger"

(A)      Du Ring an meinem Finger,  
           Mein goldnes Ringelein,  
           Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,  
           Dich fromm an das Herz mein.

(B)      Ich hatt ihn ausgeträumet  
           Der Kindheit friedlichen Traum  
           Ich fand allein mich verloren  
           Im öden, unendlichen Raum.

(A)      Du Ring an meinem Finger  
           Da hast du mich erst belehrt,  
           Hast meinem Blick erschlossen  
           Des Lebens unendlichen Werth.

(C)      Ich werd ihm dienen, ihm leben,  
           Ihm angehören ganz,



Hin ' selber mich geben und finden  
' 3 ' ' '  
Verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

(A) Du ' Ring an meinem Finger,  
' 3 ' '  
Mein goldnes Ringlein,  
' ' ' '  
Ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen,  
' ' ' ' 3 '  
Dich fromm an das Herze mein.

In the fourth song, "Du Ring an meinem Finger," she has received her engagement ring. Pressing it closely to heart, she says that it has opened her eyes to the priceless value of life. To serve him alone is her life-long wish.

This text has the same meter as the third song, iambic trimeter (˘-˘). Both songs begin with an anacrusis in the vocal line, without a piano introduction.

In measure eleven Schumann changes friedlichen to friedlich schönen. The third syllable is found on the first beat of measure twelve, thus a strong beat was desired. Schumann changes werd to will in measure twenty-five, repeats "an die Lippen" in measure seven and thirty-nine and "und finden verklärt mich" in measure thirty-one. He also adds the word tiefen to the melody in measure twenty-four to fit the tune already established earlier.

The construction of the song, ABACA, gives a parallel to song two --both are in rondo form and are written in the key of E flat major. These songs are positive in character, in opposition to the questioning songs that appear before each of them.

Measures three and four of song four, Ex. 17, P. 36, m.m. 3-4 are almost identical to measures twenty-seven and twenty-eight in song

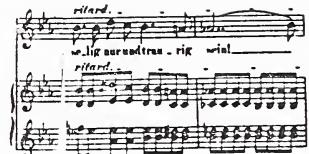


two, Ex. 18, P. 31, m.m. 12-13.

Ex. 17



Ex. 18



In opposition to the second song which rarely gives the melody to the piano except in interludes, the piano doubles the voice almost entirely throughout "Du Ring an meinem Finger."

One last comparison of these songs suggests that the accompaniment of song two tends to be vertical, with solid chords, while the piano line in song four is horizontal, with a more contrapuntal style, leaning towards a more frequent use of chromaticism as in measure four, especially evident in the alto, Ex. 17. The top line in the piano often doubles the voice, the bass is the anchor that holds it all together and the alto supplies rich inner melodies that make this song one of the most popular of the cycle.

The C section, marked "Nach und nach rascher," has the highest tessitura of the song, in that the melody rises to F on the word ganz (totally). At this point she wishes to serve him and belong to him totally, Ex. 19, P. 37, mm. 4-6.



Ex. 19



The A section returns for the final time at measure thirty-three followed by a four-measure postlude.

"Helft mir, ihr Schwestern"

(A)

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,  
Freundlich mich schmücken,  
Dient der Glücklichen heute, mir.  
Windet geschäftig  
Mir um die Stirne,  
Noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

(B)

Als ich befridigt,  
Freu

3

digen Herzens,  
Dem Geliebten im Arme lag,  
Immer noch rief er,  
Sehnsucht im Herzen,  
Ungeduldig den heutgen Tag.



(c) Bist, mein Geliebter,  
Du mir erschienen,  
Giebst du, Sonne, mir deinen Schein?  
Lass mich in Andacht,  
Lass mich in Demuth  
Mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

(A') Streuet ihm, Schwestern,  
Streutet ihm Blumen,  
Bringt ihm Knospende Rosen dar.  
Aber euch, Schwestern  
Gruss ich mit Wehmuth,  
Freudig scheidend aus eurer Schaar.

In "Helft mir, ihr Schwestern," the fifth song, the young woman asks her sisters to help her prepare for her wedding, and dispel her foolish fears so she may receive him with open eyes. To her sisters she bids a sad farewell, though she leaves them with joy.

This song, the mid-point of cycle, is the first one since number one that is in B-flat major. This Key becomes synonymous with happiness and hope, first in "Seit ich ihn gesehen" where she meets him and



second in "Helft mir, ihr Schwestern" where she approaches married life.

Schumann changes freudiges to freudigen in measure twelve, heut'gen to heutigen in measure eighteen, "gibst du Sonne mir" to "gibtst du mir" in measure twenty-nine, and bringt to bringet in measure thirty-nine. He adds sonst to measure thirteen and lass to measure thirty-three.

The meter of this poem, dactylic dimeter, easily lends itself to the march-like quality of this song. As in song two and four it is in rondo form (ABACA'). It is similar to the second song, also, in that the accompaniment is independent of the vocal line and goes off in its own direction.

The arpeggios in the introduction, with a dotted rhythm on the last beat, set up a feeling of elated impatience as she prepares for the wedding ceremony, Ex. 20, P. 38, m.m. 1-5.

Ex. 20

When speaking to her sisters (in the A sections) the vocal line stated at the beginning is repeated with regularity. When speaking of her future husband (in the B and C sections) the melodic line arches higher and higher. This song is similar to song two and four in that the A sections in all three songs remain in the key of the beginning without modulation. The one exception is in the last A section of song five, with the use of third relation.



In the B section (measure eleven) the vocal line begins with the movement from F to G, then in measure twelve the same rhythmic motif begins on A. Measure fifteen shows the same pattern starting on B flat (dominant of E-flat major) rising up to G, creating a feeling of intensity to describe "his" heart which is filled with yearning, waiting for the wedding day, Ex. 21, P. 38, m.m. 11-18.

Ex. 21

In the C section, measure twenty-seven, instead of beginning the theme with the interval of a major second, a perfect fifth is used (F to C). It strays still higher to D and E-flat, as she asks "him" to come so that she may bow at his feet. Two measures later the same pattern appears, this time rising to D, E natural and finally F, Ex. 22, P. 39-40, m.m. 14-18.



## Ex. 22



When she greets her sisters with sadness in the last verse Schumann has an effective change to G-flat major, Ex. 23, P. 40, m.m. 8-11. The use of third relation plays a significant role in this cycle. As mentioned earlier it is used to separate songs with substantial difference in emotional character. In this song it is used to separate the main body of the song, which is very happy and optimistic, from the two measures where she feels sadness due to the parting from her sisters.

## Ex. 23



The piano postlude (or codetta) is significant in that it is actually a miniature wedding march, Ex. 24, P. 40, m.m. 14-20.



Ex. 24



"Süsser Freund"

(A) Süsser <sup>2</sup> Freund, du blickest <sup>3</sup>  
Mich <sup>4</sup> verwundert <sup>1</sup> an,  
Kannst <sup>2</sup> es <sup>1</sup> nicht <sup>3</sup> begreifen,  
Wie <sup>4</sup> ich <sup>1</sup> weinen <sup>2</sup> kann;  
Lass <sup>4</sup> der <sup>1</sup> feuchten <sup>3</sup> Perlen  
Ungewohnte <sup>1</sup> Zier <sup>3</sup>  
Freudenhell <sup>2</sup> erzittern <sup>3</sup>  
In <sup>4</sup> den <sup>1</sup> Wimpern <sup>2</sup> mir.

(A) Wie <sup>2</sup> so <sup>1</sup> bang <sup>3</sup> mein Busen,  
Wie <sup>4</sup> so <sup>1</sup> wonnevoll!  
Wusst <sup>2</sup> ich <sup>1</sup> nur <sup>3</sup> mit Worten  
Wie <sup>4</sup> ichs <sup>1</sup> sagen <sup>2</sup> söll;  
Komm <sup>4</sup> und birg <sup>1</sup> dein <sup>3</sup> Antlitz  
Hier <sup>1</sup> an <sup>2</sup> meiner <sup>3</sup> Brust  
Will <sup>1</sup> in's <sup>2</sup> Ohr <sup>3</sup> dir flüstern  
Alle <sup>4</sup> meine <sup>1</sup> Lust.



Submitted by  
Schumann

Hab ob manchen Zeichen  
Mutter schon gefragt,  
Mat die gute Mutter  
Alles mir gesagt,  
Mat mich unterwiesen,  
Wie nach allem Schein,  
Bald fur eine Wiege  
Muss gesorget sein.

(B)

Weisst du nun 3 die Thränen,  
Die ich weinen kann,  
Sollst du nicht 3 sie sehen.  
Du geliebter Mann,  
Bleib an meinem Herzen  
Fühle dessen Schlag,  
Dass ich fest und 3 fester  
Nur dich drücken mag.

(A')

Hier an meinem 3 Bette  
Hat die Wiege Raum,  
Wo sie still 3 verberge  
Meinen holden Traum;  
Kommen wird 3 der Morgen,  
Wo der Traum 3 erwacht,  
Und daraus dein 3 Bildniss  
Mir entgegen 2 lacht.

In "Süsser Freund" (Sweet Friend), she speaks of the joys and fears of expecting her first child. Her husband looks at her with amazement and cannot understand why she weeps. By her bed the cradle will have its place. This lovely dream will awaken one morning and his image will smile up at her from the cradle.



This song, divided into three sections, has a ternary form (AABA'). Schumann substitutes freudig hell for freudenhell and Auge for Wimpern in the first A section. In the B section he repeats geliebter (beloved) and "fest und fester" (firm and firmer). At the end of the song he repeats "dein Bildnis" (your image). Schumann omits the third stanza of the poem, relating to the mother and how she was consulted.

The only instance of a key signature change in all the songs (excluding the final postlude of the cycle) is in the B section of this song where the key moves from G major to C major.

In the A sections Schumann dwells on the dominant, creating a feeling of anticipation without resolution to the tonic, G major, until the end of the song where she speaks of the dream coming true with the birth of his image.

In the meter of this song, trochaic trimeter, the first two words are a small unit in themselves, set apart from the rest of the phrase by a comma. The melody has been written to correspond to this structure. In the next phrase, "kannst es nicht begreifen...", Schumann repeats the same music thus creating a pause after nicht instead of begreifen, where it should be, Ex. 25, P. 41, m.m. 1-7.



## Ex. 25

Langsam, mit innigem Ausdruck.

Sü...ser Frei...!  
... kann es...  
... nicht begreif... wie ich weinen kann; lass der...  
... kann es...  
... al... al... al...

The piano and vocal lines overlap one another throughout the A section. The piano part, beginning a measure before the vocal line, enters again on the last beat of the vocal line.

In the repetition of the A section there is a slight alteration in the melodic line with the words "I wish to whisper my happiness in your ear," where Schumann writes a triplet under the word "ear," followed by a leap up of a fifth and then down a minor third, outlining the dominant triad of D major, Ex. 26, P. 42, m.m. 3-4.

## Ex. 26

... rill ins Ohr dir flüstern al... le...  
... al... al... al...  
... meine Lust.



In the B section, in C major, she questions him as to whether he now understands why she cries. The music captures this questioning emotion with the melody rising to a C in the first phrase and D in the second. This section is actually divided into two parts with a piano interlude between them. The second part is marked "lebhafter," capturing the mood of the text in which she asks him to listen to her throbbing heart.

At the end of the postlude, which is based on a series of secondary seventh chords, she repeats the word "dein Bildnis" (your image).

"An meinem Herzen"

An meinem <sup>4</sup> Herzen, an meiner <sup>4</sup> Brust,  
 Du meine <sup>4</sup> Wonne, du meine <sup>4</sup> Lust!  
 Das Glück ist die <sup>4</sup> Liebe, die Lieb ist das <sup>4</sup> Glück,  
 Ich hab es <sup>4</sup> gesagt und nehms nicht <sup>4</sup> zurück.  
 Hab <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup> überglücklich <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup>  mich geschätzt,  
 Bin <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup> überglücklich <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup> aber jetzt.  
 Nur die da <sup>4</sup> säugt, nur die da <sup>4</sup> liebt  
 Das Kind, dem sie die <sup>4</sup> Nehrung <sup>4</sup> giebt;  
 Nur eine <sup>4</sup> Mutter weiss <sup>4</sup> allein,  
 Was lieben <sup>4</sup> heisst und <sup>4</sup> glücklich sein.  
 O wie bedaur <sup>4</sup> ich doch <sup>4</sup> den Mann,  
 Der Mutterglück <sup>3</sup> nicht fühlen <sup>4</sup> kann!



Du schauest mich an und lächelst dazu,  
 Du lieber, lieber Engel du!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,  
 Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

In the seventh song she speaks of the joys of being a mother. Only a woman loving a child at her breast can know the true meaning of love. She pities man, who cannot know this joy.

Schumann uses the word überschwenglich in measure ten, where Chamisso used überglücklich. Schumann has "du lieber, lieber Engel, du, du schauest mich an und lachelst dazu!" instead of "Du schauest mich an und lachelst dazu, Di lieber, lieber Engel, du!"

The poem consists of eight, two-line strophes. Schumann changes this to four strophes of four lines each, giving the song four main sections.

Harmonically it is one of the simplest songs of the cycle, alternating between tonic and dominant, a large percentage of the time. The constant rising and falling sixteenth note motion in the piano part gives the same feeling of elation that transpired in the fifth song, with the rising and falling eighth note motion.

It is noteworthy that this is the only song of the cycle, with the exception of number six, that does not begin on the tonic chord, Ex. 27, P. 44, m.m. 1-5. The first two lines of each strophe begin on the dominant and use the same intervallic material (A-D-E-C sharp-D) with the exception of the second one that ends on a B. The beats are divided differently in each strophe to accomodate



the different number of syllables in each line.

### Ex. 27

The meter of the text is iambic dimeter, which means that the first syllable is weak. In some cases Schumann places the weak syllables on an upbeat, Ex. 28, P. 44, m.m. 9-11, and in other instances places them on the downbeat, Ex. 27.

Ex. 28

The first sign of movement away from the tonic is in the last half of the second section where the music briefly moves from D major to G major and then to e minor, Ex. 29, P. 45, m.m. 4-7.



## Ex. 29

In this example, she speaks of the joy only a mother can know.

Through the use of secondary dominants the key moves from e minor to the dominant seventh chord on A, which becomes the first chord on the third section.

In the fourth section, marked "noch schneller," the sixteenth note movement of the previous section is left behind and the accompaniment becomes chordal.

The eight measure piano solo at the end brings the song to a joyful conclusion. It is significant that the last three notes are the same intervals used at the end of the sixth song for the words "dein Bildnis" (your image), Ex. 30, P. 47, m.m. 9-16. This confirms the fact that the dream spoken of in song number six has come true in this song.



Ex. 30



"Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan"

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,  
 Der aber traf.

Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmherzger Mann,  
 Den Todesschlaf.

Es blicket die Verlassne vor sich hin,  
 Die Welt ist leer.

Geliebet hab ich und gelebt, ich bin  
 Nicht lebend mehr.

Ich zieh mich in mein Innres still zurück,  
 Der Schleier fällt,  
 Da hab ich dich und mein vergangnes Glück,  
 Du meine Welt!

In the eighth and final song of the cycle, she feels her first deep pain with his death. She speaks of him as being hard and cruel for leaving her alone. The song, written in the dark key of d minor, is the most intense of the cycle and is written in a recitative style.



The poem, which contains three strophes of four lines in each, in iambic meter, has an unbalanced structure with alternating ten and four syllable lines.

The piano enters, one beat ahead of the voice, with the tonic triad marked "sf," Ex. 31, P. 48, m.m. 1-3. This is a very dramatic effect and creates the feeling of the sharp pain that she is experiencing. The vocal line enters on an A and moves down a fifth to d, which is repeated seven times.

Ex. 31

The three strophes are all treated differently so the form may be characterized as "ABC." In the second strophe (measure seven) the chordal accompaniment becomes more dissonant. She becomes more desperate as she speaks of looking at an empty world. Schumann repeats the words "ist leer" (is empty) for added emphasis, Ex. 32, P. 48, m.m. 8-14. This is Schumann's only change to this poem. Not until the end of the strophe does the dissonance come to a resolution at the c minor chord.



## Ex. 32

In the third and final strophe she withdraws into herself, quietly as the veil falls. The dynamic marking is "p" and finally "pp" as she withdraws further.

The vocal line finished on the dominant of d minor, creating for a few brief seconds the feeling that there is no hope and that her life is truly over. The A is held over in the piano and the dominant seventh of B-flat major is placed under it, Ex. 33, P. 49, m.m. 8-11. This leads fluidly into the postlude, which uses the music of the first song. The postlude has a soothing quality and it is a dramatic irony to hear the simple chords of the first song after the intense chords of the eighth song.

## Ex. 33



## CONCLUSION

In view of Schumann's literary background and keen interest it is surprising that he waited until 1840 to do any extensive writing in the medium of song. His literary inclinations must have given him serious thoughts about vocal writing from the start.

When assessing Schumann's achievement as a song writer the poet must be given special attention. Schumann's choice of poets and treatment of poems was self-expressive. He often went beyond the ideas of the poet to create something completely his own, which is the special quality of his songs that makes them so successful.

His life and work is dedicated to his wife, Clara, and it is not by chance that the majority of his love songs were written in 1840, the year of his marriage to Clara Wieck. In many of the songs he identifies the music with Clara herself, by seeing life through her eyes as in Frauenliebe und Leben.

In this cycle the woman's love for her husband goes to the point of hero worship. This paper has attempted to illustrate how Schumann portrayed this idealization and how he not only captured the emotional atmosphere of the text but intensified it through the music.

Frauenliebe und Leben has often been accused of being unvocal. This may be considered true, in that the songs require a cultivated and sympathetic musician, rather than a mere technician, but when these conditions are fulfilled there are few songs that can compare



for passionate intensity and depth of emotion.



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